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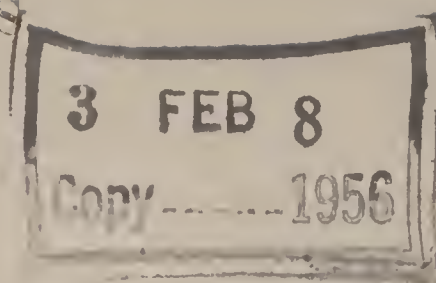
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REMARKS

ON THE



CIRCULAR LETTERS

TO THE

SECRETARY OF WAR,

TO BE SIGNED BY

ARTILLERY OFFICERS.

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WITH A REVIEW

OF THE

MEMOIR ON THE U. S. ARTILLERY.

JANUARY, 1852.

*Capt Wm Maynard*

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*Ordered by*

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REMARKS  
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These letters set forth that the officers of Artillery (at any rate those who have signed the letters) are unacquainted with the practical duties of their profession, and have not the means of acquiring a proper practical knowledge of those duties, and of instructing the soldiers therein. They also intimate that the separation of the Ordnance Corps from the Artillery, and its organization as a distinct branch of the military service, has been the cause which has brought about this state of things, and they ask of the Secretary of War a practical remedy, such as a board of Artillery Officers may recommend; suggesting that this remedy may consist in sending Artillery Companies to the Arsenal, or in establishing a school or schools of instruction and practice, where professional knowledge may be imparted to the different Artillery Regiments in rotation.

Had not the admission come from the Artillery Officers themselves, it would, I imagine, have been difficult to convince people of the existence among them of any want of professional knowledge. 'Tis true the Artillery, generally, has, for many years past, been doing duty as Infantry. But



that has resulted entirely and solely from the necessity of the case. The country wanted their services *as Infantry*. Although retaining so large a nominal Artillery force it had no employment for them as such, and instead of reducing the numbers, they were assigned to that duty which, in the judgment of the proper authority, was thought most suitable to *subserve* the wants of the country. But, while serving their country in the way in which it had pleased that country, through its properly constituted authority, to direct, a portion of them were called upon to take up their proper arm and use it in actual war against an enemy. The history of that war, and especially of the part borne in it by the Artillery, would hardly prepare one, now, for the admission, contained in the memorials of its Officers, of a want of professional skill and knowledge. What Artillery ever effected better or more glorious results? If these were attained with imperfect skill and inferior professional knowledge, must not the success be attributed, in a measure at least, to the completeness and excellence of the arms, equipments and munitions, furnished by the Ordnance Department? It may be confidently asserted, and is now so asserted without the fear of contradiction, that no army ever took the field, better provided with all the supplies, which it is the province of the Ordnance to furnish. The degree of perfection, attained in their construction, is believed to have been fully experienced in our success in the terrible conflicts which occurred during the Mexican war. At the commencement of that war, the Ordnance Department had had a separate organization, as now established, for about eight years, with one partly separate and partly mixed for six years previous; prior to which time, from the reduction of the Military peace establishment in 1821, it had remained merged in the Artillery. The kind of existence best calculated to promote the public interests; whether an entirely distinct organization, a mixed one, or a merged one

(which is no organization at all) is therefore, no longer a problem to be solved. Each has been fairly and fully tried : let experience—practical experience—the actual result of trial, the only unfailing test of excellence or inferiority—answer which is best for the public interest, and let that best be permanent. Compare the armament and equipment of our troops with what it was before the separate organization of the Ordnance Department. Then, we had no field Artillery, but some iron guns mounted on the antiquated Gribeauval carriages, with clumsy, unsafe and unweildy caissons ; and implements and equipments corresponding, in inefficient and awkward inferiority, to the guns they pertained to. We had no such thing as a siege train, and none had been seen in service for many years. We had no bronze Artillery and were not competent to its manufacture. We had no regularly adopted sea-coast and garrison gun carriages. We had no efficient mortars, and although the shell-guns had been before invented by an Ordnance Officer of the old Corps, before its organization was destroyed by the merging process, we had never availed ourselves of their power as weapons of war, and indeed were not aware of it. So much for the *material* of our Artillery under the merged state of the Ordnance Department—there was no uniformity—no system—nothing but inefficiency and confusion. The armament and equipment of our Infantry, too, although not so inferior as that of our Artillery, wanted system and uniformity. What says experience, too, in regard to the professional knowledge and skill of the *Artillery*, before the separation from it of the Ordnance ? Then, their knowledge of Artillery manœuvres and exercise was not only less than now, but the means of acquiring knowledge and skill therein were not in existence in the country—they had not been devised—there were not even books in our language, accessible to them, which might impart a theoretical ac-



quaintance with these matters. Such a thing as a harnessed battery had not been seen in the Army since the war of 1812—not a sea-coast gun had been mounted, dismounted, fired or manœuvred in any way for many years—mortar practice was unknown and there were no mortars to practice with—the operations of a siege were regarded only as something that had constituted a lesson on the black board at West Point, and no such thing as a siege train was to be found to give any more familiar idea of what those operations actually were. The erection of batteries, the fabrication and use of gabions, fascines, &c., were things that some few had read of, but none knew. The Artillery were then nothing but Infantry; and even at the Artillery school of practice, established especially to give practical instruction in that branch of the Military service, there was little taught besides the Infantry battalion drill. The idea of establishing such a school was a most excellent one. But the means of teaching—the school apparatus—were wanting; there had been no separate Ordnance Corps to construct them, and they were not constructed nor even devised. Hence the school failed to accomplish what was expected from its establishment—it became unpopular and was discontinued. Let those, who remember what was the state of the Artillery, both as to professional knowledge and skill, and as to its material, when there was no separate organization of the Ordnance Department, and what it has since become and is now—let them say whether the degree of knowledge and skill, now *commonly* possessed, does not far surpass those of any (even the most accomplished) Officer of that time; and whether the means of increasing and perfecting them do not exceed what they then were, in an infinite degree. The Ordnance Department, on its resuscitation from its merged state, found the whole subject of its appropriate labors requiring complete revision. Let some of the results due to its existing organi-



zation, believed to be known to the Army at large and to the public, be stated. And first, generally, by securing for the use of the government, competent knowledge and experience, it has, by improved fabrications, accomplished a vast saving to the government; reduced the cost and improved the quality of all arms and munitions of war. Since the National Armories have been placed under its exclusive charge, the reduction in the cost of arms manufactured thereat, has been such, that the difference between the present cost of the musket, and that under the former system of management, for the whole number of arms made, would amount to more than the pay of the *whole Ordnance Corps, commissioned and enlisted*. The American arms, exhibited with those of other nations in the *Musée des armes* at Paris, are said to be superior to all others in that Military Museum. Before the present organization of the Ordnance Department we had never succeeded in making bronze guns in this country—although many attempts had been made and much expense incurred to accomplish it. The Department took up the subject, and sent its officers to the foundries to give it their personal supervision; until by study and perseverance success was attained, and we are now no longer dependent, as before, on foreign importations for our bronze Artillery; but fabricate it equal to any in the world. Under the former system, our heavy sea-coast and garrison cannon, of iron, were very defective. The only test of their durability and safety for use, was an excessive powder proof, which weakened such as withstood it, and impaired their fitness for service. Now the tenacity, density and character of fracture of the metal of each cannon are tested, both before the casting and by samples taken from the guns. The *value* of the material is thus ascertained before we proceed to the powder proof, which we are thus enabled to regulate within the limits of injury to the pieces proved. The result is, that in-

stead of unsafe guns, nearly as formidable to their users as to the enemy, we now cast iron guns, believed to be equal to the Swedish. Formerly our only test of the strength of powder was derived from the firing of an ounce charge with the *Mortar eprouvette*. This bore no relation to the actual strength and effect of powder, as used in large charges in service. This defect, never noticed under the former system, attracted the attention of the Ordnance Department, and was corrected by a series of scientific experiments admirably conducted by an Ordnance Officer, whose labors have been published, and their value recognized not only in our service, but by translations of his work into foreign languages for the benefit of those of other countries. The result is, that now we know the actual effect of powder as it is used, instead of its supposed effect, derived from a fallacious test. Before the present organization of the Ordnance Corps there was no *system* of Artillery. Arms, carriages, &c., made at one place, would not interchange their parts with those made elsewhere—now, the parts of our small arms are thrown promiscuously together, and the complete and perfect arm is made up by taking the parts from the heap, as they come to hand. All parts of our carriages and implements are of invariable dimensions and form, and any part, that may give way, or be injured in service, can be replaced by simply calling on an Arsenal for such a part of such a carriage or implement. From a lot of broken arms or carriages the sound parts can be taken, and will fit together so as to make up complete serviceable articles. Such spare parts are sent with the parks in the field, and are always available to repair damages, in the shortest time and at the least expense. Complete manual and text books, admirable for their minuteness and system, of all the Ordnance fabrications, have been published by the Ordnance Corps, which furnish full information concerning this branch of the military service, to all the Corps of the Army.



These are some of the results of the present separate organization of the Ordnance Department. It found its peculiar business in a state of chaos, confusion and inefficiency—it has introduced system, uniformity and efficiency. It can point to the *results* of its labors and call upon *facts* to sustain the opinions of the four successive Secretaries of War, who urged upon the notice of Congress the mischief of the plan of 1821, and the adoption of the more efficient and economical system now established. These results have verified the declaration of the late Senator Calhoun. He it was, who suggested the merging of the Ordnance Department in the Artillery—and he it was who declared that he had regarded the measure merely *as an experiment*—that the experiment had been tried, and that it had signally failed. These results have more than substantiated all the advantages, which the advocates of the measure claimed would follow from its adoption, in the debates on the bill for the organization of the Ordnance Department in 1832.\* As surely as like causes produce like effects, so surely will a resort to the system then abandoned, prove again a signal failure—not only accomplishing no good end, but doing injury to both branches of the service, and to the military efficiency of the whole country. For, the providing of munitions of war for the use of the *Artillery* is not the sole, nor the most important business of the Ordnance Corps. The two largest establishments of the Department are the National Armories, which supply arms for the Infantry, which forms the strength of an army, and also for the Rifle and Cavalry Regiments. These troops might, with equal reason as the Artillery, desire to fabricate their own arms and ammunition, and to be stationed at the Armories and Arsenals for the purpose of instruction there.

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\* Gales & Seaton's Register of Debates in Congress, vol. 8, part 2, pp. 2242 to 2246.

in. Nor is the Ordnance Corps created merely to provide military supplies for the standing Army in time of peace. Its principal business, and the bulk of its expenditures, are to arm the *National Militia* and to prepare the *country* for a state of war. Even in peace, the annual issues to the militia are many times the amount and cost of the issues to the Army. This fact alone will show on what foundation stands the opinion, that the Ordnance Corps is but an appendage to the Artillery, or that the business of that Corps might be done by the Artillery in the intervals between their own duties.— A proper performance of their appropriate work is amply sufficient to occupy the whole time and attention of either Corps. *To mix them would make, as it did make when tried, indifferent Artillery and worse Ordnance. The Ordnance branch of the military service would not be the less necessary than it now is, if we maintained no Artillery and kept no standing Army in time of peace.* The nation would still provide the means of arming itself in case of war, and would require and employ a body of men, qualified by knowledge and experience, as the Ordnance Corps now is, to provide those means in the best manner.

The argument is advanced, by some, that those who use the arms should fabricate them, or understand the details of their mode of fabrication. So far from this being true, it is confidently asserted to be just the reverse. If the argument be good, it may be applied to the clothing they wear, the bread they eat, and the thousand other supplies necessarily in common use. But there is good and substantial reason why the users should *not* fabricate. It is natural for all men to look with favor on their own works, and to view any defects therein with lenity. They will pass over imperfections of their own creation, which, as the work of others, they would strictly criticise and condemn. The maker and the user should exercise a check upon each other; the latter



sparing no defect in the work of the maker, but constantly urging him towards perfection, and the former watching that his work is not condemned from carelessness, or improper mode of using it. Besides this having been exemplified in the results of the separation of the Ordnance Department from other corps, and its establishment as a distinct branch of the service, the principle is strikingly illustrated in our naval architecture. During the war of 1812, our national vessels were superior to those of any other country. They were made by ship-builders and not under the direction of sailors. Since that time, while our commercial marine has made greater advances than that of any other nation, our vessels of war, built under the direction of those who were to use them, were not only not improved, but actually retrograded, and lost, in a great measure, their former reputation for sailing qualities. And at this time, it is understood that the modeling, shaping, and other details of construction are left to the naval constructors, whose separate labors in their own branch of business have produced the best ships of our navy.

One of the remedies suggested by the Artillery Officers for their (admitted) want of professional information and skill, is to send Companies of Artillery to the Arsenals for instruction. This plan will certainly not be found to afford to the Artillery the professional benefits they suggest. There are no means of artillery practice at the arsenals. There is but a single arsenal, and that at the Artillery Post at Fort Monroe, where there is a sufficient range for artillery practice of any kind. At no other is it possible to fire anything but blank cartridges, without jeopardizing private property and individual safety. There is scarcely one of them where any piece of ordnance, above a field gun, is mounted, and no casemates, parapets, traverse circles, or other preparations, to admit of the material of Artillery being placed in the position and condition, necessary to make it available for practical in-

struction. This can only be done at the Forts. The Arsenals are merely work-shops and store-houses for the fabrication and storage of munitions of war; for the use, not of the Artillery only, but of every arm of the military service. The operations at these establishments are not the business of Artillery troops, and furnish no military employment for them. To carry on these operations properly, requires the employment of a number of civilians—artizans skilled in the mechanical arts used in the various fabrications—whose association and close contact with troops of the line would assuredly be injurious to both, and would probably lead to troublesome consequences. The Ordnance Officers, who serve at and have charge of the Arsenals, are not and do not profess to be good Artillerists, nor capable instructors in that art.—The special skill of the Artillerist is not necessary to their appropriate business, and if some of them have acquired that skill in an eminent degree, it has been by close application to the study of the Artillerist's art, while pursuing their appropriate vocation, and in connection with it. It was the possession of such skill, so acquired, that led the Commanding General to avail himself of it during the Mexican war, in assigning the control and management of the siege train. The good of the service, and the success of our arms, in his judgment required that he should make the best use of the professional knowledge and skill in his army, wherever found. It happened to be, in his opinion, in an Ordnance Officer—the command was assigned to him on this account, and carried with it the troops of his own arm, over which alone he could properly exercise command. It would have been the same if the qualifications of the Ordnance Officer had been found in one of another arm, and for the same reason and with equal propriety, the siege train might have been assigned to an Infantry, or a Cavalry Officer. The good of the service requires the employment of any and all officers, in such duties as their pecu-



liar talents and acquirements may best fit them to perform. The Commanding General is constituted the judge of the best means to attain the objects of a campaign ; all officers of every arm are put at his disposal for that purpose, and in the proper exercise of such judgment no valid complaint can be made of his infringement of any officer's rights : *they* are sunk, for the time being, in the paramount consideration of the public good. The case of the Mountain Howitzer battery was a peculiar one, such as cannot, it is thought, occur again. It was, however, but a short time in charge of the Ordnance, and was transferred to the Voltigeurs. Of its use and command after this transfer from the Ordnance, no complaint seems to be made by the Artillery. The selection of an Ordnance Officer, to serve the mortar at Monterey, was made by the Commanding General, contrary to the wishes and advice of the chief Ordnance Officer of the Army. It would seem that, in this instance, the Ordnance Officer, although *quite competent in his own sphere of business*, was not so good an Artillerist, as an officer belonging to that arm. Here is one instance, at least, of an Artillery Officer, with more professional skill than the Ordnance Officer, notwithstanding that the latter had been for a long time stationed at an Arsenal, and the former never. It shows that these stations do not necessarily impart the skill, and that it may be acquired without them.

A passing remark may be due to what is said in one of the memorials of the Artillery, in regard to their being deprived of the use of the carriages at the Forts, which are "packed away in Ordnance store-rooms," and of the "grates for hot shot firing, which are closed against" them. Carriages and all other Ordnance supplies at the Forts are, it is well known to the Artillery, not at all under the control of the Ordnance Department, but exclusively under that of the Commanding Officers of the Forts. The Ordnance Department has no

charge of any store-house at any fort—its authority and control extend not beyond the store-houses and supplies at the Arsenals. Grates for heating shot are a part of the Fort ; they are constructed by the engineers, and it is supposed, are turned over by them, with the finished forts, to the care of the garrisons.

In the foregoing remarks the following points are believed to have been established, viz : that the want of professional knowledge and skill on the part of the Artillery, admitted by themselves and only therefore assumed, is not due in any degree to the separate organization of the Ordnance Department ; that on the contrary, there was not only less of that knowledge and skill prior to the separation, but much fewer, indeed no means for acquiring it : that the existence of the Ordnance Department, as a separate branch of the military service, is required by the best interests of the Army and of the country, as has been fully proved by actual experience and indisputable facts : that the fabrication and use of arms and munitions of war, should be different and distinct branches of the service ; and that the stationing of Artillery companies at the Arsenals will be injurious to the service of these establishments, without affording any professional benefits to the Artillery.

The question now comes, what is the best method of correcting the evil complained of by the Artillery, and for which they ask such remedy as the case may demand ? The answer is, the establishment of a school for Artillery practice and instruction at Fort Monroe, Virginia ; where the Artillery shall be concentrated in rotation, by battalions at least, better by regiments, to practice Artillery-firing and manœuvres, to do duty as Artillery exclusively, and to go through a course of instruction in the laboratory. Fort Monroe is the best, and it is believed the only place, where a proper range can be had for Artillery practice ; *there* are already case-



mates for direct and flank-fires, ramparts for barbette cannon and mortar batteries—traversing circles ready laid—grates for heating shot and a laboratory with its tools and supplies—constituting a large portion of the apparatus necessary for such a school. The remainder of the school apparatus, such as siege carriages, implements, equipments and tools, stone and other mortars with their beds and platforms—columbiads and sea-coast howitzers, both casemate and barbette—mountain and prairie artillery—war and signal rockets, and whatever else the Artillerist may be called on to use, can be supplied, to furnish the school with full and complete means for instruction. Let a certain portion of the Artillery—the greater that can be spared for the purpose from other duties the better—be sent to this school for instruction, and at the same time to constitute the garrison of the Fort. Let them have no Infantry arms—nothing but cannon, except Artillery muskets and swords for guard duty. Let each detail see, handle and use, daily, some of the material of their peculiar arm, until they acquire a practical familiarity with them all; and let this course be continued in rotation, until all the Artillery have had the benefit of this practical instruction. So long as the Artillery continues, as it has been for years past, broken up into separate detachments of single companies, or at most, of three or four, and scattered about among the forts, it will be impracticable to furnish them the means of becoming practically familiar with all the numerous articles constituting the material of that arm. To supply a single school with a complete apparatus will be expensive, but that which will be requisite for the instruction of *one company*, will answer as well for *a regiment*. This is the reason why there should be but one school—and *not schools*—of instruction and practice, independently of other obvious advantages of the occasional concentration of regiments. It may be illustrated by considering the greater economy, and many other advan-

tages of one National Military Academy, to instruct Cadets from all parts of the Union, instead of one for each geographical section, or one for each State, for the exclusive instruction of the Cadets of that section, or State. But the advantages of one school, instead of several, are too obvious to require argument or illustration to prove or elucidate them. The proper time for each detail to remain at the school cannot be exactly told : it cannot be ascertained, until the school shall have gone into full and regular operation. The Officers are, *of course*, familiar with the *theory* of their profession ; that can be acquired from books, readily, by any one who has had the advantage of a West Point education. They will only require to have the school apparatus put into their possession, to enable them to instruct the rank and file—and starting with this advantage of familiar theoretical knowledge on the part of the Officers, it is supposed that a course of instruction of one year's duration, will impart a very fair practical acquaintance with their duties, to each detail. It cannot occupy more than two years.

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Since the appearance of the circular letters, on which the foregoing remarks were made, a pamphlet on the same subject has been published, entitled “Memoir on the U. S. Artillery.” That pamphlet is evidently intended as a sequence to the circular letters—has in view the same object, and is designed to adduce arguments in favor of the suggestions in the letters. It goes much more into detail ; professing to give a history of the Artillery from 1821, and to shew why the Artillery is not efficient under its present organization ; it also proposes a new and essentially different organization for that arm, materially affecting the national interest as regards its military establishment. Although the remarks on the circular letters, answer and refute all the material statements and arguments of the “Memoir,” so far as they



relate to the present separate organization of the Ordnance Department; still there are many things in this pamphlet, founded in error, both of fact and deduction, calculated to mislead the public mind, and to exercise an influence injurious to many Officers of the Army, to an important department of military service, and to the military efficiency not only of the Army, but of the nation. Such statements, scattered by means of the press, among those unacquainted with the true facts of the subject, and not having the means or the leisure to acquire right information concerning it, seem to call for an exposition of their errors and fallacies. Truth demands such an exposition, lest error unnoticed may be mistaken for it, and mislead to mischievous and pernicious results.

The main error, which runs throughout the whole pamphlet, is the assumption that the Ordnance Department is a part of the *Artillery*; that its whole business is to minister to the wants of the *Artillery*, and that the object of an Ordnance Department is to provide munitions and material of war for the *Artillery*.

Thus the memoir speaks of “the two branches of the Artillery (meaning the Artillery and the Ordnance Department) being disunited and their interests antagonistic” (p. 8)—of the Ordnance Department as “an important branch of the Artillery” (p. 9)—“the two departments of the Artillery were separated, their duties distinct, their interests to a certain degree antagonistic” (p. 10)—“the Artillery is now divided into two separate and rival branches, antagonistic in their interests” (p. 11). This error was noticed and refuted in the remarks on the circular letters. The Ordnance Department, as part of the standing army, is no more connected with the Artillery than it is with the Infantry, Cavalry or any other armed Corps. Its business, in that relation, is to provide and make arms with all the appendages and materials

required for their efficient use, for all the Corps of the Army alike. As a part of the national military establishment its business, and by far the most laborious and important part of it, is to arm and equip the militia of the country, and to provide and preserve the means of arming the nation whenever occasion may require it. As the argument in favor of that part of the plan proposed in the memoir, which merges the Ordnance in the Artillery, is based on the error which has thus been exposed and refuted, it of course falls with it.

The memoir also speaks of the “antagonistic interests” of the Artillery and Ordnance, and from its frequent repetition this seems to be a favorite phrase with the author. In what way the interests of the two branches of the military service are different, or “antagonistic,” it is difficult to imagine. It is certainly the interest of the Ordnance Department to discharge all its duties in such manner as will in all respects, best subserve the interests of the country, and in this way it strives to work for *its* interest. It is supposed to be the true interest of the Artillery to do the same, and unless the author of the memoir thinks it has some more important interest “antagonistic” to this—those of the two Corps must be identical. It is not possible to conceive where this “antagonism” can exist, unless the memoir may refer to that part of the duties of the Chief of the Ordnance Department which requires him to “examine all requisitions “for Ordnance supplies, and under the direction of the Secretary of War to modify and regulate them, in such manner as to curtail all extravagancies, to suit them to the exigencies of the service, to existing appropriations, and to just and proper views of economy ; and in the performance of this part of his duty, invariably to communicate “with the General-in-Chief of the Army.” In discharging this part of his duty his views sometimes differ from those of the Artillery, and of other Corps ; but the instance is not



recollected where he has not been able to convince the General-in-Chief of the Army of their propriety, and if this should not be the case, then *his* views would prevail. The Ordnance Department, while it has every disposition to supply all things coming within its province to furnish, which are really wanted, whether by the Artillery or any other Corps, feels bound to curtail all extravagancies, and in so doing believes that it is acting from the best regard to the interests of every branch of the service, and “antagonistic” to none.

The memoir commences by referring to the organization of the military peace establishment of 1821, whereby the Ordnance Department was made a part of the Artillery. It entirely omits to state that this merging into one, of two Corps, whose duties are, and ought to be always distinct and separate, was a mere experiment; a departure from the military organization which had been previously in existence, on a mere idea, when every means to reduce the military establishment had to be resorted to, that it among others would be one of such means which might be tried, to see how it would work practically. It states that “the organization was intended to produce under proper administration an accomplished and efficient Artillery force. It contained within itself all the necessary elements. Provision was made for the discharge of the duties attaching to the Staff of the Artillery, the manufacture of arms and munitions of war, their preparation for use—preservation, &c.” No doubt it was *intended* to work well; but the result did not answer the intention. If the organization contained *all* the necessary elements, how can the Artillery answer to the country for failure, when it had “all the necessary elements” in its own hands—all under its own control. It is certainly a new idea in the military world that “the *manufacture* of arms and munitions of war” is a duty attaching

to the Artillery or any part of it. The Artillery is designed to be, and it is thought claims to be, essentially a fighting Corps. It would seem that the author of the "Memoir" wishes to convert it or a part of it into a non-combatant portion of the military establishment. When was it ever made the duty of the Artillery to manufacture muskets, accoutrements and cartridges for the Infantry or sabres and pistols for the Dragoons? And yet these articles are included in the terms "arms and munitions of war." Even when the Ordnance Department was merged in the Artillery, it was necessary, and was provided by law, to detach the Officers assigned to such duties from the Artillery, while so employed, and to make them "subject only to the orders of the War Department." (Sec. 4, Act of March 2d, 1821.) They were, for the time being, not Artillery but Ordnance Officers, just as distinct from the Artillery as are the Officers of the present Ordnance Corps.

The various beneficial effects stated in the memoir to have been *expected* from the merging of the Ordnance Department in the Artillery, it is admitted, "have not been fulfilled." All we have gained by the organization of 1821 is "experience of its defects;" and the memoir adds "the necessary knowledge for correcting them." Now how does the memoir propose to use this knowledge? The Artillery had "within itself all the necessary elements" for fulfilling what was expected of it. From these it achieved nothing but "experience of the defects" of the plan which put those elements within its control, "and the necessary knowledge for correcting them." And yet it is proposed gravely to go back to that plan, so far as the organization of the Ordnance Department is concerned, which has failed to fulfil every expectation of benefit, and has furnished nothing but experience of its defects. 'Tis true it is proposed also, to modify the plan somewhat as concerns the Artillery—the essential mo-



dification consisting in destroying unceremoniously the grades of one-half the field-officers, and bringing up the juniors to higher grades—creating for the purpose twenty-eight additional captaincies, with a new grade, never before heard of in our service, of second Captains, who are nevertheless to “rank with other Captains of the army according to date of first commission as Captain, the distinction being only for the corps ;” in other words to give *first Lieutenants* of Artillery a new name, and make them rank with other *Captains* in the army. This is a wholesale mode of brevetting, which beats anything that was seen even during the Mexican War.

In order to prepare the way for getting rid of the grades of field-officers, an attack is made on them, at page 9 of the memoir, where the senior officers are referred to as with few exceptions, “men entirely unfitted for the higher duties of their arm,” and “little interested in a service which they did not understand, and the importance of which they could not appreciate.” Is it necessary for the object of the author of this memoir thus to undertake by one stroke of his pen, to cast a slur on all his seniors, “with few exceptions,” and to pronounce them too stupid to understand or appreciate a service in which their lives have been passed? and who, at the same time, has so good an opinion of the juniors of Artillery, as to propose the creation of new offices for their advancement, and of a new grade to put them at once on a level in rank, with other officers of the army who have attained their grades after long and faithful service? The senior officers of Artillery have experience. They probably remember what the artillery was when there was no separate Ordnance Department—how little knowledge and skill in its appropriate duties it then possessed, and how impossible it was to extricate it from its then low estate, for the want of the necessary *material* for instruction. They

have seen the vast improvement which has taken place in that material since the revival of the Ordnance Department—they now perceive that the Artillery has all the means for instruction, and wants but the time and disposition to apply those means, to make itself accomplished in all things belonging to its own duties—and they probably do not lend their countenance to a plan, the utter failure and evil results of which they have witnessed. They are probably not willing to advocate a change, although it may advance the interests of the junior members of their arm, which experience tells them is fraught with certain mischief and injury to the entire military service of the country.

A leading feature in the proposed plan is the creation of the office of Brigadier General of Artillery, “to be selected from the officers of the corps with reference to talent and administrative capacity. He is to command and administer all the affairs of the corps in whatever pertains to its instruction and equipment, including the duties now entrusted to the Chief of Ordnance.” As the senior officers have before been pronounced, “with few exceptions,” entirely unfitted and incompetent, the selection of Brigadier must either be confined to the few exceptions, or thrown open to the whole corps as seems to be the plan—the selection being required to be made with reference to “talent and administrative capacity” solely, and without regard to experience or length of service. As the selection is limited to the officers of the corps, it will be a very difficult matter to ascertain which of them has most “talent and administrative capacity” for all these duties, none having had the opportunity to shew whether they do or do not possess them. No doubt there will be many candidates, all possessing talent and capacity in an eminent degree, in their own estimation—so many indeed that it will be a mere chance if the right one is selected—and the office will after all, be filled by him who can command



most influence with the appointing power, and the “talent and administrative capacity,” so plausible in theory, will probably result practically in selection by favoritism. Whoever may be the favored candidate for this high office he has more duty assigned to him than he can properly attend to. Besides the multifarious and important duties of the Chief of the Ordnance Department, full enough to occupy the whole time and attention of one officer, he has assigned to him by the proposed plan some of the most important duties of the Adjutant General and of the present Colonels of Artillery. The latter have been disposed of by the memoir as ignorant of artillery duties and too stupid to learn; it may therefore be considered right to assign their duties to some one else. But does the Adjutant General come also under the same category? It is generally conceded that he both understands his duties and discharges them faithfully. Is he suspected of having interests “antagonistic” to the Artillery? The contrary is generally thought. Or, is he classed with the senior officers stated in the memoir to be, “old, worn-out, without sufficient education as Artillerists,” and like that “third” Colonel of Artillery, disqualified, because he entered the service “as a marine.” (See p. 10 of the memoir.)

One of the merits, claimed for the plan proposed, is its economy, and an elaborate calculation is entered into to shew how many dollars and cents it will save. Besides this calculation being wrong, at least in one instance, viz:—nearly doubling the number of Ordnance men in service, and also in charging the Ordnance Sergeants as part of the Ordnance Department, it needs “no ghost to come from the grave” to inform us that by reducing the Army in numbers, the expenditures for pay, subsistence and clothing will also be reduced: *disbanding* the Army would reduce these expenses to nothing. But it by no means follows that a saving in this way is true economy. That consists not so much in reducing the

amount of expenditures, as in applying them to proper objects, and securing the greatest amount of public benefit for the money expended.

Of the other details of the proposed plan of organization, that relating to an Artillery school of practice is good ; such a school might be established to advantage, now that there is a separate Ordnance Corps to furnish the proper school apparatus.

That relating to promotion is nothing new.

To station artillery troops at armories and arsenals is evidently an idea of those who do not understand the character or operations of those establishments. The mere placing of a single officer at the armories excited great jealousy against the military. It was regarded by many as an encroachment of the military authority on the civil, and nothing but the greatest forbearance and circumspection of the officers so assigned, and the plainest proof that no military control was assumed, has permitted the plan to stand. To station artillery *troops* there, would be fraught with great mischief and injury, and would be attended with not a single benefit.

The Artillery Board to help the Brigadier General, is another part of the plan. This Board is to do what the present Ordnance Board does. It is not assumed that the present Board is deficient in any way. Indeed it cannot be with any truth ; and there are few, if any, in the army who will venture the assertion that a more competent set of officers for such duties can be found in its ranks. Then why change them ? But besides these duties they are to prescribe the qualifications for promotion, the course of studies to be pursued, &c., and are to examine the Lieutenants for promotion to Captaincies. The members of the Board being “selected without regard to rank, from the officers of the “corps, by the Chief of Artillery ;” this will place the promotion of the Lieutenants, in a measure, under the control of



that officer. Moreover, this Board, chosen without regard to rank, would most likely consist entirely, or of a majority, of Lieutenants, and thus have the examination of themselves by themselves, to determine their fitness for promotion; a supposition not improbable, if the memoir is good authority concerning the qualifications of the senior officers. The present rule of promotion in the Artillery which has existed ever since the organization of the Army, has been proved by experience to work well. The new fangled one proposes to depart from this well tried rule, to make an experiment, the result of which, to say the least of it, must be of doubtful utility, and which is obnoxious to the very serious objection of advancement by favoritism.

While the memoir is under review, it may be well to point out *some* of the most glaring misstatements, and discolorings of facts, with which it abounds, and also some of the statements assumed as facts which contradict others as positively assumed. To notice the whole of them would involve the necessity of quoting almost the entire memoir—only a few, will therefore, be pointed out. And first, the cause of the failure of the organization of 1821, is assumed to be the want of a “directing head to the Artillery.” The true cause was the want of proper material for the use and instruction of the Artillery, resulting from the want of that Department of the military service, whose special business it was to provide it.

The statement at page 5 of the memoir professing to give an account of the successive changes in the Ordnance Department from 1827 to the present time, is disingenuous and wrong in fact. It alleges that a few Artillery Officers, one Lieutenant Colonel and four Supernumerary Captains, for their own gain, obtained a separate organization, and when they had done that, “the inevitable instinct of such bodies to “aggrandizement sprung up,” whereby the Ordnance De-



partment was increased in 1838 at the expense of the Artillery, (which by the way was increased at the same time,) and again in 1847, under "pretext" of the war with Mexico, until it now "contains 36 officers, 15 military store-keepers, 53 ordnance sergeants, and an unlimited number of enlisted men, and has gradually and almost entirely usurped the functions of the Artillery." It is difficult to conceive how so many misstatements could be manufactured out of the facts, as they really occurred, of the changes in the organization of the Ordnance Department. The separate organization of 1832 was made by an Act of Congress, passed and approved after four successive Secretaries of War had recommended it, and after the measure had been fully examined and freely discussed. It is not at all probable that the legislative power was influenced to adopt the measure by a consideration of the gain to particular officers which might ensue. On the contrary it is well known that the separate organization of 1832 was brought about entirely by the *bad* working of the plan of 1821, (the union of the two distinct branches, Ordnance and Artillery, into one,) which was so plainly proved as to make the change necessary for the public interest. The increase in 1838 was also by Act of Congress entitled "an Act to increase the present military establishment, &c.," which gave a distinct and separate organization and an increase, not to the Ordnance Department alone, but also to the other Departments and Corps of the Army, including the Artillery and Infantry. The main object of these separate organizations, it is well known, was to keep officers of Artillery and Infantry with their regiments, the evils of detaching them for duty in the Quarter Master's, Engineer's, Adjutant General's, Subsistence and Ordnance Departments, having been seriously felt and much complained of. Indeed this is pointedly referred to in the memoir, although directly contradictory to its main scope and object, at page 25, where

it is stated to be "as important to retain the instructed Artillery officer in the Corps (of artillery,) as the soldier," in order "to turn the attention of the Artillery officers entirely to their own duties." For the last increase, in 1847, the war in Mexico, (says the memoir,) was made the "pretext." A state of war is generally supposed to be quite a sufficient reason for increasing every branch of the military establishment, without the necessity of resorting to a "pretext," which means an ostensible motive, assumed as a cover for the real one. If the war was but the pretext it is much to be regretted that the author of the memoir has not given the real motive, which induced the legislative authority to increase the Ordnance Department: perhaps the influence, which operated on that authority, is intended to be stated in the phrase "the inevitable instinct of such bodies to aggrandizement." If so, that instinct must have been possessed by the army very generally, during the war with Mexico, for that war was made the "pretext" for increasing the military force to a great extent, in more of its branches than the Ordnance. The statement of the present force of the Ordnance Department is also wrong. The 53 Ordnance Sergeants "form no part of the Ordnance Department," (Report of the Adjutant General to the Secretary of War, Sept. 6, 1850,) and instead of "an unlimited number of enlisted men," it is limited to 250, and in point of fact, has less. It is further asserted that the Ordnance Department "has gradually and almost entirely usurped the functions of the Artillery, and that in the war with Mexico it assumed the legitimate duties of the Artillery in the field." The law makes it the duty of the Ordnance Department to inspect and prove all pieces of ordnance, cannon balls, shot, shells, small arms, side arms, and equipments, procured for the use of the *Armies* of the United States, and to direct the construction of all cannon and carriages and every implement and appa-



ratus for Ordnance, and all ammunition wagons, traveling forges, and artificer's wagons; the inspection and proving of powder, and the preparation of all kinds of ammunition and Ordnance stores. It also places the National Armories and Arsenals under the direction of the Ordnance Department. These duties are performed by that Department in obedience to law. In performing them it exercises its legitimate functions, and if there be any ground for the charge of usurpation, it is in the attempt by the Artillery in this memoir, to usurp and claim for itself the legitimate functions of the Ordnance. As regards its "assuming the legitimate duties of the Artillery in the field," the Ordnance merely obeyed the orders of the General-in-Chief by performing the duties he assigned them. They assumed nothing, unless obedience to the orders of their military superior be assumption. These charges against the Ordnance Department, of usurpation and assumption, thus resolve themselves into compliance with law and obedience to orders.

The next misstatement to be noticed in this review, is that which occurs at page 8 as follows: "Artillery companies  
 "were frequently detailed during the war, as at Vera Cruz  
 "and Chapultepec, to serve the heavy batteries, in which  
 "duty they earned much, but received little credit, for the  
 "batteries themselves were in the hands of Ordnance Offi-  
 "cers, and care was taken that to them the chief glories of  
 "the heavy Artillery should be given." Now the awarding of glories to particular Corps or persons, for the victories at the places mentioned, was done by the reports of the General-in-Chief of the Army. Was General Scott so prejudiced against the Artillery as to give another Corps credit for what they earned? Was he so regardless of truth as to report facts falsely, and to take care to do so? Or so careless as to permit it to be done by others? And where was the Chief of Artillery? Did he make no effort to give the



Commanding General correct information as to the share of glory earned by, and due to his own Corps? This is a serious attack on the justice and the veracity of General Scott. They have heretofore, it is believed, been unquestioned, and it becomes him, who now attacks them, to be well prepared with his proofs to sustain such an attack—an attack made too, it would seem, in mere wantonness: for, at page 30, when it is deemed necessary for the argument to shew the reputation and glory acquired by the Artillery “reference to official reports of *all* the Mexican battles is invited.” The attack is followed up and again repeated, at page 29, by stating that the Artillery were excluded from their appropriate duties during the Mexican war, in an “insulting and contemptuous manner.” As the Commanding General alone had the power to exclude or assign duties to the different Corps—the insult to, and contempt of the Artillery here charged, must be referred to him in addition to the injustice and want of veracity before charged. It is a weak cause which needs, to sustain it, such unfounded and unjust insinuations.

Again, at page 9, the memoir states, “That department “ (the Ordnance) has gained a high reputation for ability “ and usefulness in a portion of its peculiar duties, but when “ called upon to act with or supply Artillery troops it has of- “ ten, either through inability, or a want of sympathy with a “ rival Corps, been deficient in rendering the services due “ from it and expected by the Army.” So the Ordnance has “its peculiar duties!” notwithstanding the reiterated assertions in the memoir that it was only a part of the Artillery; that all its duties did, and of right ought to pertain to the Artillery, and that its separation therefrom was destructive of the unity of that Corps. This main argument, in favor of the proposed plan of reorganization, is thus abandoned; unless it be a part of this plan to dispense with those duties

as useless, the performance of which gains for those who do them “a high reputation for ability and *usefulness*.” This acknowledgment of the ability and usefulness of the Ordnance Department, and also the repetition of the compliment, at page 11, where the Ordnance Officers are said to “have in many respects performed their legitimate functions ably, and to have fulfilled, so far, all that was expected of such a Corps,” are gratefully received and duly appreciated. It would have hit nearer the mark—indeed in the *bull’s-eye* of truth, if the “many respects” had been corrected to “all respects.” The assertion that the Ordnance Department has been often deficient in rendering the services due from it, is met by a flat contradiction, and the proof is challenged. If it be intended to apply the assertion only to the connected qualification “due from it *and* expected by the Army,” then, if there has been deficiency, it is owing to unjust and unreasonable expectations. The Department has never failed to render the services that could be rightly and reasonably expected from it.

Whoever may read the memoir cannot fail to notice the discrepancies and contradictions of many of the assumed facts. Among these may be given, as samples, that, at page 5, the number of enlisted Ordnance men (who are declared by law to be “regular troops,” Act 10th July, 1848) is assumed to be unlimited, while at page 14, the Ordnance Officers do not serve with troops—also at pages 9 and 10, the senior Officers of Artillery with few exceptions are old and unacquainted with their duties, while at pages 28 and 29, the Officers of Artillery, with few exceptions, are intelligent men of good military education, possessing the talent, the capacity and the will to elevate their Corps to an equality with the best Artillery in the world—an equality, by the way, which it is immediately proved, by a recital of their acts, they already possess. And again at page 8, the chief glories earned by the



heavy Artillery, at Vera Cruz and Chapultepec, were given to the Ordnance, while at page 30, the official reports of *all* the Mexican battles, prove the falsehood of all the charges against the Artillery ; these charges appearing in the memoir for the first time, never before preferred, and now gotten up apparently for no other purpose than their easy refutation, which immediately follows. There is so palpable a transformation of effect into cause, at page 9, as to deserve notice, if only for the *completeness* of the blunder. It is there stated that the principal *cause* of the failure of the system of 1821, was the organization as a separate body of the Ordnance Department. Now, the failure and insufficiency of the existing system (that of 1821) was the chief argument in 1832 for the measure then adopted by Congress ; viz.—the reorganization of the Ordnance Department as a separate branch of the military service. The separate organization was the effect, produced by the failure of the system of 1821—and the failure was the *cause* of that reorganization.

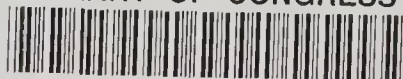
The memoir closes with a reference to the great ability, energy and skill, displayed by the Artillery during the Mexican war, and the high reputation it gained for itself in this, the only opportunity it has had to test its merits. Its achievements in that war, and the valuable and glorious services it rendered to the country are well known, and cannot be too much commended. Is it desirable, is it expedient, is it politic, is it likely to conduce to the public interest, to destroy an organization which produced such results ? Must the system, under which such artillery was trained, be abandoned ? Must that, which has been proved and found good, be changed merely to try an experiment, whose success is more than doubtful ? Must we abandon a system whose results have been so useful and so glorious, and adopt that proposed in the memoir, similar, yea, almost identical, with what experience has proved a signal failure ? It is a homely



adage, but there is sound sense in it, "let well enough alone;" it commends itself to observance more especially, when, as in the present instance, a great public interest is concerned, and our military efficiency as a nation, is more than likely to be seriously injured by a departure from it.



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